STRIVE
SUMMER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FOR TEENS
ONLINE GUIDE

Monroe Carell Jr.
Children's Hospital
at Vanderbilt

Striving to Help

Striving to Learn

Striving to Lead
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“I was nervous about working with sick kids and their families, but by the end of the program I was very confident and loved it!”

“I felt like I made children and their families happy and maybe made their experience at the hospital better.”

“Interacting with different patients and switching rotations was a great way to see more of the hospital.”
Program Overview

Strive offers a unique service learning opportunity for teens. The program fosters a commitment to volunteering, offers valuable insight into a variety of healthcare professions, and provides the opportunity to work in multiple areas of the hospital with patients, siblings, and family members.

This experience cultivates a sense of leadership, initiative, and confidence in participants. They work with mentors to plan, implement, and evaluate age-appropriate activities for patients and siblings in pediatric playrooms and waiting rooms. They assist with cleaning toys, circulating the book and comfort carts, and conducting science experiments with patients.

A typical day in the life of a Strive volunteer includes meeting with Strive interns, participating in team-building activities, volunteering with patients and families, participating in educational sessions, and working on a collaborative project.
APPLICATION PROCESS

Strive is designed for teens ages 16 to 18-years-old. In order to apply, all applicants must be 16-years-old by the end of the previous year. It’s a two-step process, and you must complete both steps to be considered for the program.

Step One: Application + Essay

In addition to your application information, we want to know how this experience will impact your life and why you should be selected as a Strive volunteer.

Successful essays will incorporate the following:

- Our Focus Values (these can be found on our website)
- The desire to meet new people
- The desire to give back to the community
- The desire to help patients, siblings and families
- The desire to learn about the medical field

The essay section is included on the application and will be judged on originality, punctuation and grammar. It should be 500-1500 words in length.

The application form will also ask you to indicate your preferred date for an interview session. You can list more than one, in order of preference. For your convenience, all important 2017 dates are listed on our volunteer webpage.

The recruitment session for this opportunity is closed.

Step Two: References

1. Identify two people who can give you a reference for this program. Good examples include teachers, pastors, scout leaders, etc. Please do not use family members.

2. Please direct them to the volunteer section of our website, and have them click on the “Reference Form” link (below the “Guidelines for Strive” link) to submit their recommendation.

3. We encourage them to read through this online guide before providing a reference.
SELECTION PROCESS

A team of hospital staff will review all applications and conduct personal interviews for each applicant.

Criteria

Selection criteria includes:

- Previous volunteer and work experience
- GPA
- Student leadership positions
- Communication skills
- Ability to take initiative
- Interest in spending time with hospitalized children and their families

Interview Session

The applicant and a parent/guardian will attend the interview session.

This interview will consist of an activity for a group of applicants. Each group will be facilitated by Volunteer Services and Child Life Staff. All applicants will have an opportunity to demonstrate their creativity, communication skills and ability to work as a team.

Parents/Guardians will attend an information session to learn about our process. This includes volunteer responsibilities with patients and families, program expectations, hospital guidelines and the process for immunizations.

All applicants will notified by letter, regardless of acceptance into the program.
Lunch and Learn educational sessions are offered on a daily basis. Presenters from a variety of healthcare professions share about their roles and how they work with patients and families. They also answer questions related to career development.

Past presentations include child life, music therapy, social work, community pediatrics, cardiology, LifeFlight, Pediatric Trauma, pharmacy, organ donation, hematology/oncology, and radiology.

“I was amazed at how Vanderbilt had the resources to help so many people so far away through the LifeFlight program, and how much it impacted people in the greater Middle Tennessee area.”

“Trauma Day was an eye-opening experience that gave me an increased admiration for the doctors and nurses who work in the Emergency Department.”
SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Special programs are another benefit of the Strive program. Past presentations include:

**Ronald McDonald House**
*Tour and overview of services*

**Motor Vehicle Safety**
*Educational program that includes a tour of a trauma bay in the pediatric emergency room and presentations by a pediatric trauma surgeon and pediatric injury prevention program manager*

**LifeFlight at Vanderbilt**
*Presentation by the program director of LifeFlight, tour of the landing pad, and exploration of the helicopter (if available)*

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PROJECT

As a Strive volunteer, you will participate in a project during your session. The goal of this project is to bring together the gifts, talents, and abilities of each volunteer in a collaborative effort to benefit the patients, families, and staff of Children’s Hospital.

The intent is to foster a sense of ownership over part of the program, facilitate teamwork, and increase creativity. By providing a fun and meaningful experience, we hope to support Children’s Hospital’s FOCUS value of maintaining a unique environment for children.
Rotations

Strive volunteers will participate in daily morning and afternoon rotations through different areas of Children’s Hospital.

Playrooms: Sibling, 6th Floor, 7th Floor

Tasks
• Oversee playrooms during morning or afternoon rotations
• Plan age appropriate activities for playrooms
• Sign in patients and identify whether or not they are allowed to play in that area
• Engage with patients and families
• Maintain an organized environment in each playroom

Activity Cart (Doctor’s Office Tower): 4th-9th Floors

Tasks
• Maintain cart cleanliness and organization
• Distribute age-appropriate activities
• Interact with patients who are waiting for appointments
• Clean toys and restock cart after each rotation
Book Cart/Comfort Cart: 6th, 7th & 8th Floors

The book cart provides age-appropriate books for patients and family members. The comfort cart provides therapy and comfort items, as well as diversionary activities for patients and families.

Tasks
- Clean and stock carts for in-patient floors
- Read a patient census
- Interact with patients and family members

Diagnostic Imaging and Surgery Waiting Rooms

This role supports Child Life and nursing staff in the diagnostic imaging and surgery waiting rooms.

Tasks
- Stock activity carts or bins with supplies and activities to entertain patients and siblings
- Interact with patients and families
- Distribute age-appropriate activities to children

Science

Volunteers plan and implement age-appropriate science activities for school-age patients and siblings. Experiments may include working with circuit boards, making goo, or creating chemical reactions in plastic bags.

Tasks
Prepare and facilitate science experiments with patients at bedside
STAFF AND INTERNS

Strive volunteers work closely with Strive interns, Child Life and Volunteer Services staff. Interns are carefully selected college students who share an interest in working with children in a hospital setting.

These interns experience working with a wide range of children and youth, and have a desire to mentor teens. After a screening and selection process, they are trained on how to work effectively with hospitalized patients and families.

Interns supervise and evaluate Strive volunteers, as well as plan activities and provide feedback. They are available to answer any questions or concerns throughout the session. Children’s Hospital staff will also assist in training, as well as offer guidance and support during Strive sessions.
EVALUATIONS

A unique aspect of the Strive program is the opportunity for volunteers to receive feedback on their performance. Interns offer valuable advice on each of the volunteer’s strengths, as well as areas for improvement and growth.

Categories include professionalism, responsibility, attitude and interaction with others.

The opportunity for a teen volunteer to continue volunteering at Children’s Hospital following participation in the Strive program is based on a successful evaluation.

OUR CREDO

Children’s Hospital is driven by its credo, and as a member of the hospital team you will be expected to act based on the following:

- We provide excellence in healthcare, research and education.
- We treat others as we wish to be treated.
- We continuously evaluate and improve our performance.

CREDO Behaviors

- I make those I serve my highest priority.
- I have a sense of ownership.
- I conduct myself professionally.
- I respect privacy and confidentiality.
- I maintain and promote effective communications.
- I am committed to my colleagues.